

Summary of the Family Forest Habitat Conservation Plan (FFHCP)

The purpose of the FFHCP is to develop forest practices that better fit the family forest lands of Lewis County in a way that helps owners *harvest more timber in more efficient ways* while also protecting our public resources in scientifically credible ways. After 14 years, millions of dollars, numerous expert analyses, and thousands of volunteer hours this plan is an incentive for landowners to stay in forestry. Additionally, the FFHCP clearly offers more environmental and wildlife benefits than our current statewide “Forest and Fish” regulations which are better suited for industrial forestry practices.

Family forestland owners are able and willing to use lower impact management techniques that more closely mimic the natural historical forest processes; techniques that maximize economic returns while enhancing the forest legacy we leave for our heirs. Using incentives rather than penalties, landowners will voluntarily maximize resource protections and public benefits for generations to come.

The stream buffers in the FFHCP are narrower than current rules, without sacrificing any stream functions. While helping family forest landowners in Lewis County, the FFHCP will be providing the following enhancements to our current “Forest and Fish” protections.

The Family Forest Habitat Conservation Plan:

- Protects upland wildlife not covered in “Forest and Fish”.
- Harvests are limited to 60 acres – far less than allowed in “Forest and Fish”.
- Requires at least 50-70 year old trees before harvest – not in “Forest and Fish”.
- Buffers all perennial streams - some are not buffered in “Forest and Fish”.
- Leaves more and better wood for upland wildlife than in “Forest and Fish”.
- Provides higher quality woody debris for streams than “Forest and Fish”.
- Mimic’s nature (patchiness, diversity, bigger trees) better and faster than “Forest and Fish”.
- Increases the level and quality of peer-reviewed science used in “Forest and Fish”.
- Is more efficiently tailored to our landscape than the one size fit’s all “Forest and Fish”.
- Provides species and landowners with 100 years of regulatory certainty- for future generations—50 years more than “Forest and Fish”.

No environmental debt or compromises have been made. It’s a voluntary program with opt out clauses for landowners and regulators alike. There are no losers in this HCP. Winners include: all our streams and wildlife; our family forest owners; and the citizens of Lewis County. This will be an effective tool that helps keep more of Lewis County forested for generations to come.